

# SANCTITY TODAY AND EVERYDAY

EXCEPTIONAL TIMES DEMAND EXCEPTIONAL CONDUCT. The wave of evil today can only be turned back by a counter-wave of holiness. But holiness today is looked upon, in general, as a mental disorder rather than the practice of virtue. Nevertheless, every living person is called upon to participate in this counter-wave and in the work of expiation and reparation. The situation is so critical that no one has a right (and never has had a right) to be mediocre. We cannot be satisfied with being half a saint. We must be a whole saint or no saint at all. "The lukewarm and the indifferent I shalt vomit out of My mouth."

As each sin compromises the salvation of the world, so does each good action performed as an act of expiation and reparation help some poor - unknown - sinner to salvation. If men only knew what awaits them in eternity, they would do everything in their power to change their lives and bring themselves more closely in conformity to the wishes of the eternal God. But what exactly is it that God wishes of those who work to bring their lives into conformity with His expectation? Can the demands of God be met by mortal man? Is it possible for the work of finite man to be satisfactory to an infinite God? The truth of the matter is that what God asks of any of us is so simple and so very reachable. The penance, the expiation, the reparation that God asks of each of us is simply to persevere in doing His Will in all things, which means the keeping of His Commandments and accepting all the sufferings and difficulties encountered in the vicissitudes of everyday living with patient and prayerful resignation.

Unfortunately, many people imagine that penitence means the practice of great austerities, painful fasts, tedious prayers, torturous hair shirts, and all the rest. The result of this mistaken and uncalled-for practice, which is usually constructed around personal preference, disordered conventions, and improper religious formation, is that inevitably since most people have neither the strength nor the generosity to undertake such austerities perseveringly for great lengths of time, they become discouraged and even disillusioned when things fail to meet their personal expectations, and they literally give up and then fall, sooner or later, into a life of indolence, indifference, and sin.

If we but look at the matter squarely and work to exercise the virtue of prudence; if we but take the time to study and imitate the life of Christ; if we but make the trip to the House of Nazareth and enter into that life; we will soon learn that all that God asks of any of His children is to offer up as penance and prayer the sacrifices necessary to avoid sin, however difficult such an avoidance may be in our present pagan environment. God